NORDIC ODYSSEY

FAMILY GUIDE
ROVANIEMI

EASILY PLAN YOUR FAMILY HOLIDAY IN THE FAR NORTH !

ROVANIEMI - LAPLAND - FINLAND

www.nordicodyssey.net

Finnish Lapland

Finnish Lapland is a region located in the far north of Finland, beyond the Arctic Circle. Known for its wild and unspoiled landscapes, it offers a unique immersion into a vast natural world made up of extensive forests, snowy hills, and frozen lakes in winter.

This region is also the ancestral homeland of the Indigenous Sámi people, whose culture, traditions, and way of life are closely connected to the Arctic environment. Reindeer herding, handicrafts, and traditional joik singing reflect this living heritage.

Finnish Lapland is world-famous for its spectacular natural phenomena. In winter, visitors can admire the northern lights illuminating the sky, while in summer the midnight sun brings endless daylight.

Rovaniemi

Located in the heart of Lapland, the city of Rovaniemi is often considered the gateway to the Arctic. Crossed by the Arctic Circle, it offers a unique setting where wild nature and modern infrastructure coexist in harmony.

Rovaniemi is world-famous for hosting the Santa Claus Village, where visitors can meet Santa Claus all year round. This iconic site attracts travellers from all over the world, eager to experience a magical journey in the heart of the Nordic winter.

The city is also an important cultural and educational centre. It is home to the Arktikum Museum, which offers a fascinating insight into the history, culture, and environment of the Arctic region.

In winter, the area experiences the kaamos period, or polar night. Rather than complete darkness, this season brings a soft bluish light for a few hours each day, creating a unique and almost surreal atmosphere. It is worth noting that in Rovaniemi, the polar night is less pronounced than in areas further north. Thanks to its geographical location, the city still receives some daylight even in the depths of winter.

In Rovaniemi, temperatures vary greatly by season, with very cold winters typically ranging from -10°C to -30°C, while summers are mild, with temperatures between 15°C and 25°C.

Key data

Population : 63,000 inhabitants
Area : 7,582 km²
Local time : GMT +2
Latitude : 66° N (on the Arctic Circle)

Helsinki – Rovaniemi : 1h15 by plane
Helsinki – Rovaniemi : 12h by bus/train
Ivalo – Rovaniemi : 3h30 by bus
Kittilä – Rovaniemi : 1h45 by bus
Ylläs – Rovaniemi : 2h with guided transfer

The seasons

Winter (November to April)

Winter is the longest and most pronounced season in Finnish Lapland. Temperatures generally range between -10°C and -30°C, but can drop to -35°C or even -40°C during extreme cold spells.
From November onwards, snow settles for the long term and completely transforms the landscape. Lakes and rivers gradually freeze.
From December to January, the region enters the kaamos period (polar night): the sun barely rises or stays very low on the horizon. It is not completely dark, but daylight is extremely limited : only a few short hours of dim, bluish light. This is the darkest time of the year and an ideal period for observing the Northern Lights.
From February, the days begin to noticeably lengthen. The sun rises higher in the sky, bringing more light and a sense that winter is coming to an end. By March, daylight is much stronger, with temperatures often between -5°C and -15°C. In April, the region enters a transition phase: snow slowly begins to melt during the day, although nights remain cold and wintry.

This is also a great time for outdoor activities: cross-country skiing, snowshoe hiking, and snowmobiling are still possible, but with more daylight and often more pleasant conditions than in mid-winter.

Spring (May to early June)

Spring in Finnish Lapland is very short and acts as a rapid transition between winter and summer.
Temperatures rise from around 0°C at the beginning of the season to 10–15°C by June. Snowmelt is intense, making the ground muddy and waterlogged. Rivers experience a sharp increase in water levels due to melting ice. This period is striking but can sometimes make travel in nature more difficult.
Daylight increases very quickly : days become dramatically longer, and night gradually disappears. Vegetation begins to return, although it remains fragile and still sparse at the start of the season.

Summer (June to August)

Summer in Finnish Lapland is short but remarkable for its brightness and mild temperatures. Temperatures generally range between 15°C and 25°C, with occasional heatwaves reaching 28–30°C.
From June to July, the region experiences the midnight sun : the sun does not set for several weeks, providing continuous 24-hour daylight. This extended light encourages intense activity in both nature and local life.
Forests become lush and green, lakes fully thaw, and wildlife is highly active, including reindeer, migratory birds, and insects.
It is the main season for outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing, fishing, mountain biking, and camping. However, mosquitoes can be quite present due to humidity and warmer temperatures.

Autumn (September to October)

Autumn in Finnish Lapland is short but spectacular.
Temperatures gradually drop from 10–15°C to around 0°C, or slightly below zero in October. This is the season of ruska, a natural phenomenon in which the forests transform into a vibrant landscape of red, yellow, orange, and brown tones.
Days shorten quickly, nights return, and the first frosts often appear as early as September. By October, the first snowfall can already occur, signalling the approaching winter.

Food in Lapland

Due to the extreme conditions in the region, traditional Lapland cuisine is based on a limited range of locally available ingredients : reindeer or elk meat, salmon, potatoes, and lingonberry or blueberry jam.
It should also be noted that it is not always easy to find restaurants serving traditional dishes at affordable prices. In some areas, options can be limited, and well-known Lapland restaurants, especially in tourist hotspots, can be more expensive due to high demand.

Buffet option

Finland is not particularly known for its culinary culture.

In fact, lunch often consists of hot dogs, pizzas, or a low-cost buffet option (around 13€ per person) served in small restaurants or even at gas stations.

This concept is so deeply rooted in local daily life that even international restaurants (Asian, Mexican, etc.) typically offer an all-you-can-eat buffet lunch as well.

In Rovaniemi

Downtown Rovaniemi is full of cafés, bars, and restaurants.
As Finnish culture is not particularly focused on gastronomy, you will mainly find places offering international cuisine as well as cafés and bistro-style eateries.

We have created a map bringing together different restaurants and bars in the city. It includes useful tips to help you make the most of your experience.

Good to know :

- Check opening hours, as some establishments may be closed on certain days or close earlier than expected.
- People under 18 are not always allowed in bars, especially after 7 p.m.

OUR FOOD TIPS

NILI RESTAURANT

A rare traditional cuisine restaurant in the city centre, offering service in a very picturesque setting. The only downside is its high price (very tourist-oriented).
Price range : 22€ - 52€
nili.fi

ROKA STREET BISTRO

Popular with locals, this bistro serves simple, good-quality dishes. We especially recommend the salmon soup.
Price range : 5€ - 35€
ravintolaroka.fi

CAFÉ 21

A very cozy café where you can enjoy excellent pastries, generous waffles (both sweet and savoury), and salads.
Price range : 6€ - 13€
cafebar21.fi

PURE BURGER

The best burgers in town, served in a retro-style setting. This place is also a great alternative for trying reindeer meat without breaking the bank.
Price range : 10€ - 20€
kauppayhtio.fi

SANTA'S SALMON PLACE

At Santa Claus Village, this is one of the few good dining spots. Their specialty is firewood-cooked salmon, served inside a traditional wooden hut.
Price range : 5€ - 19€
santas-salmon-place.com

GUSTAV KITCHEN

A trendy restaurant-bar located on the main street (Koskikatu), offering a well-curated menu at affordable prices.
Price range : 11€ - 16€
gustavkitchenbar.fi

QUENCH YOUR THIRST WITH OR WITHOUT ALCOHOL!

ESPRESSO HOUSE

Here, you can enjoy your coffee in a Nordic, hipster-style atmosphere !

THE COFFEE HOUSE

Open very early in the morning, this is the perfect place to enjoy your morning coffee or a small snack between activities.

UITTO PUB

A downtown pub that pays tribute to the history of Rovaniemi and its lumberjacks.

OLIVER'S CORNER ou WANHA MESTARI

Two side-by-side bars on the pedestrian street offering a great experience for anyone looking to dance the night away or enjoy a fun evening with friends.

THE BULLBAR

A pub where you can eat, drink, and play various games. Children are welcome, as the pub also serves food.

Please note! Minors are not allowed in establishments serving alcohol after a certain time (around 7 p.m.), except in restaurants.

Getting to Rovaniemi

Located in the southern part of Finnish Lapland, the city of Rovaniemi benefits from the dual advantage of being easily accessible and regularly served by various public transport options.

By train

Trains, including overnight services, connect Rovaniemi with Helsinki (a journey of about 12 hours), as well as other major Finnish cities. These trains offer a convenient and comfortable way to travel across the country, with the opportunity to enjoy snowy landscapes in winter.
Rovaniemi railway station is located 1.5 kilometres from the city centre.

To book :
www.vr.fi/

By plane

Located 12 km from the city centre, Rovaniemi Airport offers indirect connections to Europe and the rest of the world, usually via the Finnish capital Helsinki. During the winter season, several airlines operate direct flights from multiple cities in Europe.

Airlines :

- Finnair
- EasyJet
- Ryanair
- Norwegian
- Air France
- KLM

Direct flights:

- Paris
- Copenhagen
- London
- Madrid
- Edinburgh
- Bruxelles
- Milan - Bergamo
- Barcelona
- Dublin
- Istanbul
- Berlin
- Manchester

By bus

Rovaniemi is also accessible by bus from Helsinki. It is also the northernmost major destination connected by train; if you wish to continue your journey further into Lapland and venture further north, you will only find local bus services.

To book :
www.matkahuolto.fi/
www.onnibus.com/

Our tips

- Book in advance: Flights to Rovaniemi are in high demand in winter, so plan ahead to get the best prices.
- Be flexible: Weather conditions can cause delays, so remain flexible with your schedule.
- Check connections in Helsinki: If you have a layover, make sure you allow enough time for your transfer.

Where to stay?

In Rovaniemi

Rovaniemi is a popular tourist destination offering a wide range of accommodation options to suit all budgets. Below is a complete list of hotels. The city also has many Airbnb rentals spread throughout the area.
It is important to note that prices vary depending on the season: autumn is generally more affordable than the highly popular Christmas period. The hotel offering is very diverse, ranging from unique snow-built hotels or glass-roof accommodations to charming cabins nestled in the heart of nature.

Budget ★★
Comfort ★★★
Luxury ★★★★

In the city centre & within walking distance

ARCTIC LIGHT HOTEL ★★★★
Located in the very heart of Rovaniemi city centre, this 4.5-star hotel is recognized as one of the best in Finland.
arcticlighthotel.fi

ARCTIC CITY HOTEL ★★★★
Located right opposite our agency, this hotel offers a luxurious setting similar to the Arctic Light Hotel, but at slightly more affordable rates.
arcticcityhotel.fi

HOTEL SANTA CLAUS ★★★★
This hotel, located on Lordi Square in the centre of Rovaniemi, faces the tourist information office. The Santa Claus Hotel (not to be confused with the Santa Claus Holiday Village in Santa Claus Village !) also has a more affordable and less luxurious property, the Rudolf Hotel, located 400 metres from the city centre.
santashotels.fi

SCANDIC HOTELS ★★★
Scandic hotels are part of the major Scandic hotel chain, which is present throughout Finland. They therefore offer the advantage of large accommodation capacity, especially during holiday periods when availability elsewhere is more limited.
scandicrovaniemicity.fi
scandicpohjanovi.fi
Scandic Polar

GUESTHOUSE BOREALIS ★★
Located near the train and bus stations, this hotel offers a wide range of rooms at an attractive price. However, expect a 15–20 minute walk to the city centre.
guesthouseborealis.com

HOTELLI AAKENUS ★★
Hotel Aakenus is located just off Rovaniemi's main street, Koskikatu. Expect a 5–10 minute walk to the city centre.
hotelliaakenus.net

Accessible by public transport

SANTA CLAUS HOLIDAY VILLAGE ★★★
Located in the heart of Santa Claus Village, the Santa Claus Holiday Village (not to be confused with Hotel Santa Claus in the city centre !) offers a wide range of small cabins, providing full immersion in a Christmas atmosphere.
santaclausholidayvillage.fi

OUNASVAARA SKY HOTEL ★★★★
At the top of Ounasvaara Hill overlooking the city, right by the ski slopes, the Ounasvaara Sky Hotel enjoys a perfect setting. You will be a little far from the city centre, but directly in the heart of the forest.
laplandhotels.com/sky-ounasvaara

NOVA SKYLAND ★★★★
The hotel complex is located behind Santa Claus Village, a 5-minute walk from Santa Claus's house. The restaurant offers a well-known and highly recommended buffet, even if you are not staying at the hotel.
novaskyland.com

GLASS RESORT ★★★★
Located right next to Nova Skyland, behind Santa Claus Village, the Glass Resort offers luxurious chalets with glass roofs, perfect for stargazing and possibly viewing the Northern Lights.
glassresort.fi

Where to stay ?

Chalets close to the city centre

LAKITUVAT CHALETS ★★★★
A collection of cabins in the heart of the Ounasvaara forests. The chalets are spacious and ideal for groups of up to 6 adults.
safartica.com

OUNASVAARA CHALETS ★★★★
This group of chalets is located at the foot of the ski slopes on Ounasvaara Hill, closer to the river than to the forests.
laplandhotels.com/ounasvaara-chalets

SAARITUVAT ★★★
Located outside the city, this collection of chalets and individual cottages is situated on the northern bank of the Kemijoki River, in the outer area of Rovaniemi. It is ideal in both winter and summer if you have a car.
saarituvat.fi

airbnb

Renting a private accommodation via Airbnb is an economical option, especially for families and larger groups.

It is also a good alternative to traditional hotel rooms for those who wish to enjoy an independent stay.

On Airbnb, you will find a wide range of Nordic-style apartments close to or in the city centre. Outside the centre, there are more houses and chalets available, particularly around Ounasvaara and the surrounding forests.

OUR CITY CENTRE APARTMENT*

*Contact us directly for special rates

Our recommendation

We do not necessarily recommend staying in Santa Claus Village. Located 8 km from the city centre, you may quickly feel cut off from the rest of the city, including its bars and restaurants, and you will always depend on transport.
Although the village undeniably has charm and a magical atmosphere during the day, the liveliness fades after 6:00 p.m. when restaurants and shops close.

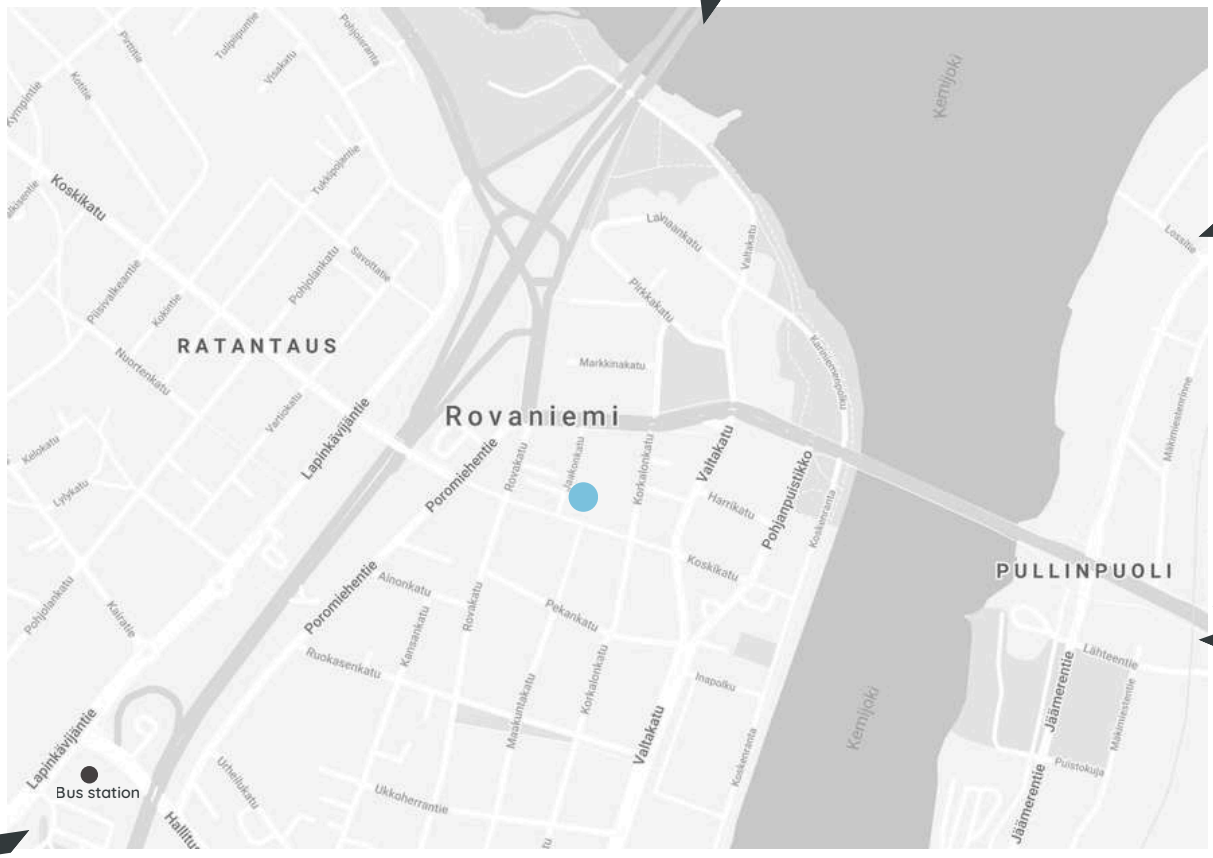
We therefore recommend choosing accommodation closer to the city, and keeping half a day in your itinerary to visit Santa Claus Village.

If possible, we recommend choosing accommodation with a sauna. In general, most homes include one, as the sauna is an essential part of Finnish culture. A sauna session is greatly appreciated to warm up and relax after a day of outdoor activities in the cold !

If your accommodation does not have one, we then recommend trying a traditional wood-fired sauna experience in nature during your stay.

Want to know more ?
Discover our selection of accommodations on our website.

Getting around Rovaniemi



Our agency Nordic Odyssey - Jaakonkatu 4-6, 96200 Rovaniemi

ON FOOT

Rovaniemi city centre is relatively small, so it is easy to explore on foot. You will have access to most shops, restaurants, and cafés, as well as certain activities such as museums, the Angry Birds playground for children, and all service facilities (banks, etc.).

BY BUS

If you wish to visit Santa Claus Village, you can take bus line 8, which departs from the station and passes through the city centre. Tickets can be purchased directly on board.

In winter, a special direct service called the "Santa Express" is also available to reach the village.

BY TAXI

A taxi can be an affordable option in Rovaniemi if you are looking for a quick transfer from the city centre to the airport or Santa Claus Village, for example. Expect to pay around €30 for 1–4 passengers and €40 for 5–8 passengers.

Book at meneva.fi

Good to know !

We will pick you up directly from your hotel or Airbnb for all activities we offer with a French-speaking guide, provided you are staying within a radius of 750 m to 8 km from the city centre (including Santa Claus Village).

Life in Lapland

In Rovaniemi

Rovaniemi is the capital of Finnish Lapland. Located just a few kilometres from the Arctic Circle in the southern part of Lapland, it offers many advantages for travellers seeking Arctic experiences!

Every year, millions of tourists visit this small city to enjoy the beauty of winter, spend the festive season, or meet its most famous resident : Santa Claus! As Rovaniemi is a popular destination, we recommend booking your accommodation and activities in advance (especially in December and February).

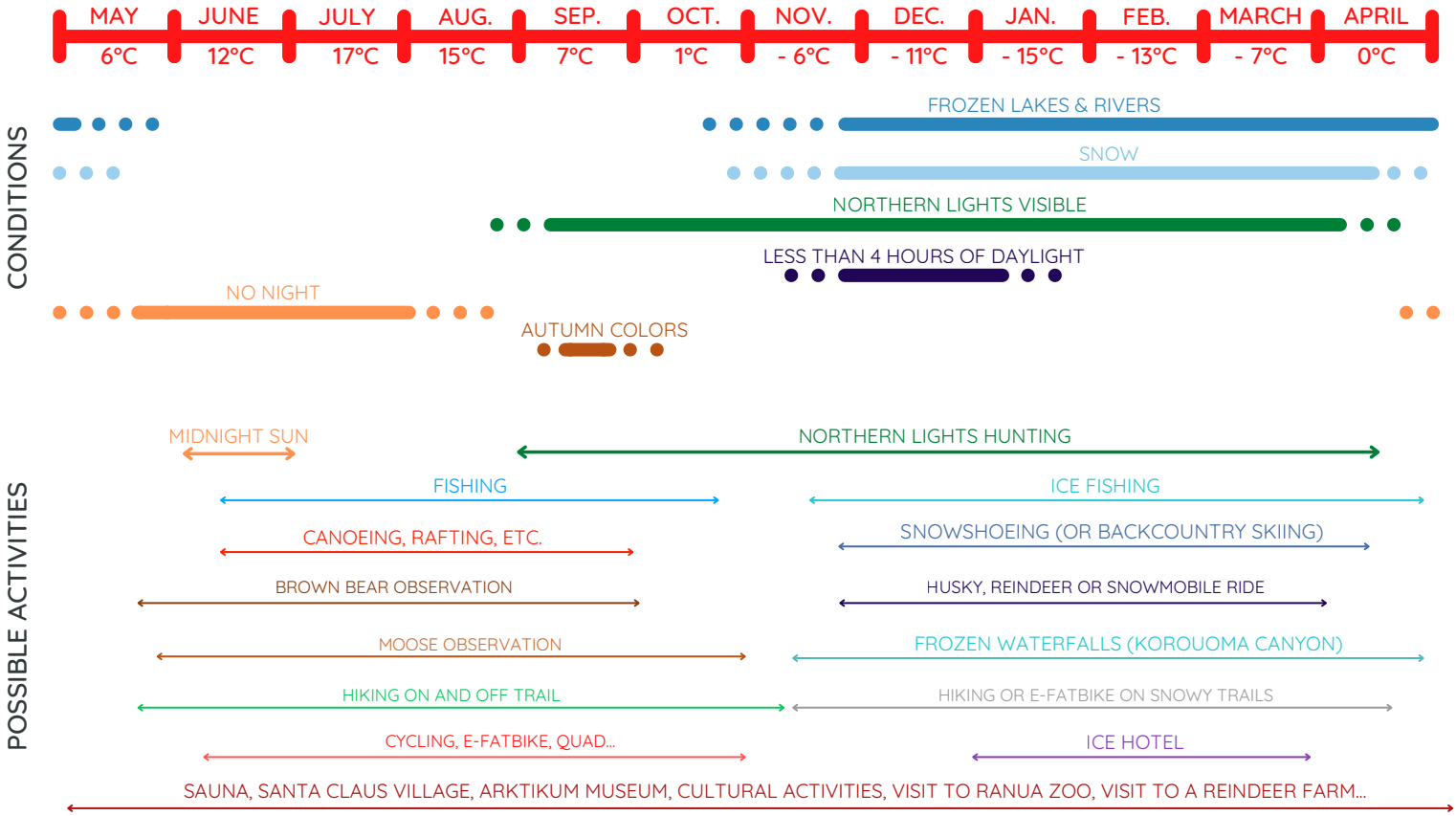
Overall, the city is a perfect base for exploring Lapland, with a wide range of local activities available. It also benefits from at least a few hours of daylight in the heart of winter, unlike further north where the polar night is much more pronounced in December.

Cost of living

The cost of living is generally high in Finland, and even more so in Lapland due to its remote location and challenging conditions. Prices for alcohol and food may come as a surprise. For example, it is difficult to find a bottle of wine for less than 9€. A basic can of beer costs around 2–3€ in supermarkets, while a pint in a bar costs about 8€.
A sliced loaf of bread costs around 2€ in supermarkets, 1 kg of tomatoes about 3€, and a chocolate bar around 4€. However, if you choose local products, prices remain more reasonable: about 1€ per litre of milk, and 0.50€ per kg of porridge oats.

CONDITIONS & POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES IN ROVANIEMI

The charts below show the weather conditions and possible activities depending on the time of your stay.



Good to know

About Finland

ALCOHOL

Alcohol with an alcohol content of more than 8% is sold at a special "ALKO" store, which holds a government-controlled monopoly on alcohol sales. Opening hours are limited (the store closes after 9 p.m.), especially on weekends. Similarly, low-alcohol beverages (under 8%) are no longer sold after 9 p.m. in supermarkets.

DEPOSIT & RECYCLING

All plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass bottles are subject to a deposit ("pantti"). Deposit amounts range from €0.10 to €0.40, depending on the size and material of the container to be recycled. At the entrance to supermarkets, you'll find machines where you can return your bottles and cans and get your deposit back. So don't throw your bottles in the trash!

SAUNA

The sauna is a true Finnish tradition, with nearly one sauna for every resident. This wellness ritual, deeply rooted in the culture, is often followed by an avanto: a refreshing dip in icy water. This alternation between heat and cold stimulates circulation, strengthens the immune system, and provides a unique sensation.
Want to discover this authentic experience? Book your sauna session with us and immerse yourself in tradition.

CANDY

Don't be surprised to see licorice or "Salmiakki" and candy everywhere. It's the little treat that almost every Finn adds to their shopping list!

WATER

You'll likely find little to no bottled mineral water in supermarkets. Finland takes pride in having some of the cleanest water in the world. So, whether at home or in a restaurant, we drink tap water. And if you do find bottled water for sale, it's probably imported or sparkling water...

CURRENCY

Did you think you could use your coins during your stay in Rovaniemi? Think again! Finland no longer accepts 1- and 2-cent coins, as they are considered too small. In fact, when you pay in cash at the register, the total will be rounded to the nearest 0.05 €. Furthermore, since credit card payments are widespread, you can pay with a credit card almost anywhere. This is very convenient, as there are few ATMs in the city center (OP Bank has one at the tourist office).

KARAOKE

Although Finns are known for being shy and reserved, they're also surprisingly talented at karaoke. So don't be surprised if some bars host special karaoke nights or if you suddenly hear a Finn grab the mic and start singing! And don't laugh too hard, it might be your turn next...

Souvenir ideas

City center

Santa Claus Village

LAURI GUESTHOUSE

This craft shop specializes in creating items in the Sámi tradition using natural, renewable materials, while adding a modern twist to its products (jewelry, kitchenware, clothing, and original designs). You can also participate in workshops to create your own souvenirs.

Pohjolankatu 25, 96100 Rovaniemi

NORDIC ODYSSEY

If you'd like to bring back some souvenirs from your trip to Lapland, our agency offers a variety of items (mugs featuring legends about the Northern Lights, firesticks, sausage skewers, tote bags, and reindeer meat).

Jaakonkatu 4-6, 96200 Rovaniemi

LAPLAND BREWERY

Cette brasserie propose des bières artisanales inspirées par la nature laponne. Des visites sont disponibles si vous voulez en apprendre plus sur la fabrication de leurs bières.

Teollisuustie 14B, 96320 Rovaniemi

MARIMEKKO

Marimekko is a brand known worldwide for its colorful patterns, which appear on a wide range of products, including clothing, accessories, linens, tableware, and home décor.

Centre ville Maakuntakatu 29-31, 96200, Rovaniemi

Santa Claus Village, Joulumaantie 1, 96930, Rovaniemi

SANTA'S LUXURY

This store sells products from various Scandinavian brands (clothing, accessories, shoes, home goods, cosmetics, and a wide selection of gift ideas).

Koskikatu 18, 96200 Rovaniemi

MARTTIINI

This shop offers a variety of traditional Finnish knives that have been in use for nearly a thousand years. These knives are made from domestic tree bark, leather, and reindeer antler.

Koskikatu 25, Centre Commercial Rinteenkulma, 96200, Rovaniemi

Santa Claus Village, Tähtikuja 1, 96930 Rovaniemi

ARKTIKUM

For gift ideas, you'll find a wide selection at the Arktikum Museum shop, featuring products made in Lapland (jewelry, books, design items, and Lappish handicrafts).

Pohjoisranta 4, 96200 Rovaniemi

VALLEY SHOP

A store dedicated to the world of the Moomins, iconic characters in Finnish culture based on a series of books and comic books.

Santa Claus Village, Joulupukin Pajakylä, 96930 Rovaniemi

Preparing for the cold

In winter, temperatures in Rovaniemi hover around -10°C and can sometimes drop as low as -30°C between December and February, which is the coldest time of the year. Being well-prepared for the extreme cold is therefore also a way to ensure you have a great vacation despite the harsh conditions of the Arctic winter.

Base layers

T-shirts (long-sleeved), tank tops, leggings, etc., will make up the first layer of your clothing. These items must be dry when you wear them, so be sure to bring enough for the entire duration of your trip. We strongly recommend merino wool and 100% wool clothing.

Warm clothing

Sweaters, fleece jackets, or lightweight down jackets are essential. They can be worn under a winter coat or ski pants.

For your feet

2 pairs of winter socks, preferably wool (because wool helps keep your feet dry). Winter boots should be high enough to cover your ankles and waterproof to keep snow from getting inside. The sole should be thick to prevent direct contact between your foot and the cold ground. Go one size larger so you can comfortably wear two pairs of socks; a little “extra” air will always help with insulation rather than a shoe that’s too tight.

Coat or Snowsuit

A thick winter coat, ski pants, and/or a snowsuit are required for outdoor activities. Make sure this third “outer layer” is waterproof and windproof. A hood is strongly recommended to protect your head from wind or snow.

Protect your head

Make sure to wear a hat, balaclava, or fur hat to minimize heat loss, which occurs most significantly through the head. Also make sure your ears are well covered ! A scarf or neck warmer can also protect the parts of your neck that might be left exposed by your coat.

For your hands

If you’re going to invest in gear, it should be gloves! A good pair of ski gloves will do the trick, and you can pair them with liner gloves (or mittens), which will come in handy if you want to take your hands out to snap a photo. Chunky mittens are also a good option (always with liner gloves) because they keep your fingers warm against each other...

Let’s be honest : there’s bound to be a moment during your trip when you’ll feel the cold in an unpleasant way (especially in your hands and feet). Even the best clothing and gear won’t be able to keep you warm all day long. So you need to be prepared for that, too, by planning ahead for long outdoor hikes and times when you’re less active (sitting around the fire, etc.). But you’ll survive!

Packing Checklist

Winter version

Before heading to Lapland and Rovaniemi in particular, it's essential to pack carefully to be prepared for winter conditions.
The key to a successful winter trip lies in a simple rule : stay warm while maintaining freedom of movement.
This requires choosing the right clothing, designed as a layering system as well as essential accessories that are often overlooked.

Clothing

(3-layer system required)

- ◯ Thermal underwear (top + bottom)
- ◯ Long-sleeve T-shirts
- ◯ Warm pants (ski-style)
- ◯ Wool sweater or thick fleece
- ◯ Warm down jacket or extreme cold-weather jacket
- ◯ Extreme cold-weather gloves or mittens
- ◯ Thin undergloves
- ◯ Warm hat covering the ears
- ◯ Neck warmer / scarf
- ◯ Wool socks
- ◯ Waterproof winter boots
- ◯ Swimsuit (sauna)

Accessories

- ◯ Sunglasses
- ◯ Thermos for hot drinks
- ◯ Energy bars
- ◯ Bag for wet clothes
- ◯ Backpack
- ◯ Reusable heat pads*
- ◯ Thick/insulated insoles

Health

- ◯ Moisturizer
- ◯ Nourishing lip balm
- ◯ Sunscreen (useful in the spring)
- ◯ Basic first-aid kit
- ◯ Basic hygiene products
- ◯ Tissues

Useful resources

- ◯ Camera
- ◯ Phone
- ◯ Power bank (cold weather drains batteries quickly)
- ◯ Chargers

For children

- ◯ Full-body ski suit
- ◯ Spare gloves
- ◯ Sunglasses (to protect against glare on the snow)
- ◯ Small backpack for activities
- ◯ Comfort blanket

Our tips

If you're short on luggage space, there's no need to invest in a full set of ski gear or cold-weather clothing just for a few days. In Lapland, and especially in Rovaniemi, it's very common to rent equipment on-site that's perfectly suited to Arctic conditions. This is both a practical solution because you'll be traveling lighter and a cost-effective one, as you'll avoid a costly purchase for a one-time use.
We also offer a rental service for cold-weather clothing and snow boots, so you can get kitted out as soon as you arrive and enjoy your stay to the fullest without any hassle.

*HEAT PADS – A FALSE GOOD IDEA!
We do not recommend their use, partly for environmental reasons (heat pads are an ecological disaster, especially for mammals that eat them), but also because of their counterproductive effect : rapid, intense heat causes sweating, which then freezes in extreme temperatures… Furthermore, during long hikes, heat pads in your shoes cause uncomfortable friction and increase the risk of blisters. If you do want to use them, choose reusable one, and use them only in cases of extreme cold (not as a preventive measure against the cold).

Packing Checklist

Summer version

In the summer, you'll need to adapt to a variety of natural conditions: midnight sun, occasionally unpredictable weather, and mosquitoes. Being well-prepared will help you stay comfortable throughout your trip and fully enjoy outdoor activities.

Clothing

- ◯ Lightweight T-shirts
- ◯ A sweater or lightweight fleece for the evenings
- ◯ Windbreaker or rain jacket
- ◯ Lightweight pants
- ◯ Shorts
- ◯ Swimsuit + towel (for lakes and saunas)
- ◯ Comfortable hiking shoes
- ◯ Sandals or city shoes

Accessories

- ◯ Water bottle
- ◯ Sunglasses
- ◯ Cap / hat
- ◯ Lightweight hiking backpack
- ◯ Snack

Health

- ◯ Mosquito repellent (we provide it)
- ◯ Soothing spray or cream for insect bites
- ◯ Sunscreen
- ◯ Basic first-aid kit
- ◯ Lip balm
- ◯ Basic toiletries
- ◯ Tissues

Useful resources

- ◯ Camera
- ◯ Phone
- ◯ Power bank
- ◯ Chargers

For children

- ◯ Comfortable, breathable clothing
- ◯ Lightweight waterproof jacket
- ◯ Cap or hat
- ◯ Small backpack for excursions
- ◯ Comfort blanket

Travel light, rent when you get there!

Renting equipment: a practical and cost-effective solution

Traveling light and on a budget is possible ! We offer sports equipment and winter gear for rent, perfect for those who want to explore Rovaniemi and the surrounding area with complete freedom. Our equipment is high-quality, easy to use, and available directly at our agency in downtown Rovaniemi.

LEARN MORE

Thermal suits and winter boots

Our professional snowsuits provide effective protection against the cold down to -20°C. Designed to be worn over your own clothes, they combine comfort and warmth. Our waterproof, high-top boots are suitable for all terrains, whether snowy or urban.
Snowsuit + boots : 20€/day
Snowsuit + boots : 5€/activity with us

Snowshoes and walking poles

We rent snowshoes and Leki poles. They are easy to use, adjustable to fit your foot shape, and very comfortable.
Sizes (EU) : 35 to 50. Children's models also available.
Snowshoes : 20€/day, 50€ for 3 days
Poles : 10€/day, 25€ for 3 days
Snowshoes + poles : 25€/day, 65€ for 3 days

E-fatbikes and electric mountain bikes

The bike's electric motor makes riding very easy and enjoyable, even in the snow !
Fat bikes and regular bikes are always rented with a helmet and a lock.
The minimum height requirement is 120 cm.
Electric bike : 45€ for 2 hours; 60€ for 4 hours; 80€ for 8 hours

Altaï Ski

We rent Altaï skis, also known as "gliding snowshoes." These typically Finnish skis, featuring integrated skins, are suitable for all types of terrain and are designed for both ascents and descents. They're perfect for venturing off the beaten path.
Skis + poles: 60€/day, 140€ for 3 days

Winter Cleats

Rent high-quality winter cleats to safely explore the slippery trails around Rovaniemi, including the Korouoma Canyon !
Winter cleats : 10€/day

Travel light, rent when you get there!

Everything you need for an outdoor adventure

Sleeping Bags & Sleeping Pads

Rent a Marmot Wild River Long sleeping bag : comfortable and warm, designed to keep you cozy on cold winter nights in Lapland. Air mattresses, four-season tents, and other camping gear are also available and suitable for all seasons!
Sleeping bag : 20€/day

Barbecue set

The trails of Lapland are dotted with public fire pits and open shelters called laavu. With this outdoor grilling kit, enhance your hiking experience and enjoy a cozy break around the fire !
Complete set : 10€/day

Everything you need to gear up your little adventurers !

We offer rentals of everything you need for your little ones : bike trailers, baby carriers, travel cots, sleds, snowshoes, and skis, as well as children's snowsuits and boots.
Bike trailer (2 children) : 30€/day
Expedition sled : 30€/day
Baby carrier backpack : 20€/day

See the complete list of our equipment on our website :
https://nordicodyssey.net/fr/location-equipement-rovaniemi/

Other rental services in Rovaniemi

Winterent : winter clothing rentals
SantaSport : rentals of cross-country skis, forest skis, snowshoes, fat bikes, and more. Contact: santasport.fi
Ounasvaara Ski Station : alpine ski equipment rentals and ski passes. Contact: Ounasvaara.fi

Any questions?

Our team is here to assist and advise you in planning your trip to Lapland, whether you need to rent equipment or book activities.

Contact us:
→ info@nordicodyssey.net
→ +358 (0) 44 248 98 94

Activity guide for 0-3 year olds

At this age, babies have difficulty regulating their body temperature. This means that the cold affects them much more quickly than it does adults. Even when dressed warmly, a baby can get cold quickly without it being immediately obvious. That's why outings should be short and always closely supervised.

OUR WINTER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤

Electric fatbike rides, suitable for the whole family—even the littlest ones, thanks to a go-kart.

→ Discover this activity

Winter activities

✓ Walks in a snow stroller or a thermal baby carrier are ideal because they allow for controlled exposure to the cold while ensuring constant warmth thanks to insulated gear.

✓ A private tour of the Ranua Zoo offers a calm and tailored experience.

✓ The Finnish sauna provides moments of relaxation and well-being, with essential breaks to regulate body temperature. In Finland, children start going to the sauna as early as one or two years old...

✓ Handicraft workshops are perfect for staying warm while discovering local culture.

✓ Santa Claus Village is a great option because it combines magic with heated facilities.

What to avoid ?

Activities such as long dog-sledding or snowmobile trips are unsuitable for babies and very young children, as they involve several factors that are difficult to tolerate: the cold, vibrations, and, above all, prolonged immobility. In this situation, the child cannot warm up through movement nor clearly express their discomfort.

Similarly, viewing the Northern Lights is generally not suitable for this age group. Although the phenomenon is spectacular, it requires waiting outside in the cold for long periods, often at night, which is incompatible with a baby's needs for sleep, comfort, and a regular routine.

More broadly, the majority of guided outdoor activities in Lapland are not accessible to children under 3 years of age, not only for safety reasons, but also to ensure that activities run smoothly for other participants. Nature excursions (snowmobiling, husky sledding, long hikes, ice fishing) often require active participation or cold tolerance that toddlers cannot provide.

OUR SUMMER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤

A visit to a reindeer farm is a great way to experience the Arctic region without any physical exertion.

→ Discover this activity

Summer activities

✓ Nature walks with a baby carrier

✓ Short outings on electric fatbikes with a child kart

✓ Santa Claus Village

✓ The Finnish sauna for relaxing family time

Summer is easier because conditions aren't as extreme as in winter. However, the midnight sun can disrupt your baby's sleep, which requires a few adjustments (blackout curtains, regular naps).

Note :

Even in summer, mosquitoes can be very prevalent in the forest. You should therefore protect any exposed skin.

Activity guide for 4-7 year olds

Children are starting to actively enjoy the activities, but their tolerance for the cold is still limited. They can have fun but get tired quickly without always saying so, which makes supervision essential.

OUR WINTER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤

Afternoons featuring Finnish legends and folktales by the fireside, for a warm and cultural experience.

→ Discover this activity

Winter activities

✓ Reindeer and dog sled rides are ideal because they offer an immersive experience without requiring physical exertion, but make sure they don't last too long.
✓ Games that get the body moving, and thus keep you warm naturally are the best. Be careful, though, not to play in the snow too much, as it can quickly get your clothes wet !
✓ Visits to Santa Claus Village.
✓ Snowshoeing is a great way to warm up
✓ Viewing the Northern Lights, if suitable for children
✓ A visit to the Arctic SnowHotel offers a unique immersion in an environment carved out of ice.
✓ Ice fishing introduces an authentic cultural and local dimension.

What to avoid ?

Long waits or extended outings can cause children to gradually get cold, a sensation they often don't notice. This is one of the main risks.

In addition, children of this age tend to be very absorbed in play or exploration and don't always correctly recognize the signs of cold. They may continue to play even as their bodies begin to cool down, increasing the risk of discomfort or sudden fatigue.

You should also avoid activities where the child remains motionless outdoors for long periods, such as certain snowmobile excursions or extended periods of observation without movement (for example, long northern lights hunts that are not suitable for children).

Finally, it is not recommended to plan overly packed days with several consecutive outdoor activities without regular breaks to get back inside. Children aged 4 to 7 have limited thermal endurance and need frequent alternation between outdoors and indoors to maintain their comfort and energy levels.

OUR SUMMER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤

Canoe trips, whether during the day or at sunset, offer a peaceful activity that's perfect for winding down at the end of the day.

→ Discover this activity

Summer activities

✓ Hiking in Korouoma Canyon
✓ Supervised swimming in lakes
✓ Hiking to pick wild berries
✓ Fatbike ride with a child kart

Summer is ideal for this age group because children can move around freely. The main challenges are mosquitoes and fatigue from the long, sunny days.

Activity guide for 8-12 year olds

This is the perfect age group for exploring Lapland. Children are starting to build up their stamina and are able to understand safety instructions.

OUR WINTER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤️

The Arctic Adventure : an experience where you'll learn to snowshoe, navigate in the forest, ice fish, and build a fire. All to become true adventurers !

→ Discover this activity

Winter activities

✓ Northern Lights Hunting
✓ Nighttime skiing or snowshoeing under the Northern Lights
✓ Hiking in Korouoma Canyon
✓ Extended reindeer safari

Important to know :

At this age, children may overestimate their abilities. The cold, however, remains constant. It is therefore important to emphasize constant communication about how they are feeling, regular hydration (hot drinks), and managing fatigue, which can set in more quickly.

What to avoid ?

At this age, another common mistake is to assume that the child is "old enough" to manage their own physical sensations. In reality, children aged 8 to 12 are often so focused on the activity that they ignore the early signs of fatigue or getting cold. They may continue to expose themselves to the cold without asking for a break, which gradually increases the risk of mild hypothermia or a drop in energy levels.

OUR SUMMER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤️

A day-long hike to explore Lapland's natural beauty, followed by a relaxing evening spent admiring the midnight sun and wrapping up the day on a high note.

→ Discover this activity

Summer activities

✓ Mountain biking in the forest
✓ Camping in wilderness nature
✓ Husky kart
✓ Workshop on the Northern Lights

Good to know :

This is the perfect age to develop independence in nature. Children can participate in longer sports activities.

Activity guide for 13-17 year olds

Teenagers can participate in almost any activity, but they tend to want to test their limits. This requires supervision to ensure their safety, especially in remote areas.

OUR SUMMER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤️
A day-long ski expedition to learn Altaï skiing techniques while exploring the Finnish wilderness.
→ Discover this activity

Winter activities

✓ Snowmobiling and dog sledding safaris.
✓ Winter sports build endurance and improve technique.
✓ Northern Lights Hunting
✓ Hiking and a tour of the amethyst mine
✓ Overnight camping on a frozen lake

These activities are engaging because they combine freedom, responsibility, and exploration.

What to avoid ?

At this age, it's also important not to overestimate teenagers' ability to cope with Arctic conditions. Even if they are physically capable of walking long distances or engaging in sports activities, they may underestimate the combined impact of the cold, fatigue, and wind, which can quickly reduce alertness and reaction times.

It is also not recommended to set out on long routes without a clear plan or precise information on weather conditions. In Lapland, the weather can change rapidly, and an area that seems straightforward can become more challenging (deeper snow, reduced visibility, ice). Without guidance or preparation, this can complicate the activity.

OUR SUMMER FAVORITE ACTIVITY ❤️
A multi-day canoeing adventure offering a peaceful and immersive experience, allowing you to explore the scenery in a whole new way, at the river's own pace and in close contact with nature.
→ Discover this activity

Summer activities

✓ Multi-day hike
✓ Electric fatbike ride
✓ Discovering local legends around a campfire
✓ Horseback riding

Important to know :
Even in summer, conditions can change quickly (rain, cold nights, isolation). Proper preparation is essential.

The Northern Lights

Good to know

The Northern Lights are one of the most spectacular natural phenomena visible in Lapland.
They are entirely natural, unpredictable, and depend on several factors : solar activity, clear skies, the absence of light pollution, and adequate preparation.

What are the Northern Lights ?

The Northern Lights are not a constant or regular phenomenon. They occur when charged particles from the Sun collide with gases in Earth's atmosphere, creating colorful lights in the night sky, usually green, but sometimes purple, pink, or red.
In Lapland, they are most visible between September and March, when the nights are long and dark. The clearer the night sky, the better the chances of seeing them.

Possible excursions

Several types of excursions are offered to maximize your chances of sightings :

Some tours use minibuses to travel to open areas based on the weather forecast. Others offer more immersive experiences, such as campfires in the nature or guided night hikes.

These excursions are recommended because local guides monitor weather conditions in real time and select the most favorable areas at the time of the outing.

What should I wear?

Watching the Northern Lights often means staying still outdoors for an extended period of time. As a result, you can feel the cold very quickly, even if the temperatures don't seem extreme at first. It is essential to wear thermal layer, an insulating layer such as a fleece, and a very warm jacket suitable for extreme cold. Your extremities should be particularly well-protected with thick gloves, a hat that covers your ears, and insulated shoes with wool socks.

Traps to avoid

One of the main traps is believing that the Northern Lights are guaranteed. Even though some agencies offer "guaranteed northern lights," it is scientifically impossible to predict them with certainty. Some tours claim to cover all of Lapland to ensure sightings. In reality, they can increase the chances of seeing them by adapting to the weather and moving to more favorable areas, but they can never guarantee the result. It's mostly a marketing ploy...

Another traps is staying outside too long without proper preparation. The wait can be long, and the cold can become uncomfortable if you don't have the right gear.

Adapt the outing to the children's ages :

- Younger children should stay warm and observe briefly.
- Children ages 6–11 can enjoy a short but supervised outing.
- Teens can participate in longer Northern Lights hunting

Finally, keep in mind that the sky may be completely overcast, even if conditions are favorable elsewhere. In that case, no aurora will be visible.

The Northern Lights should be viewed as an unpredictable natural phenomenon, not as a guaranteed attraction. The most authentic experience involves embracing the uncertainty and enjoying nature, as the moments when they appear are often unexpected and all the more impressive.

Traps to avoid

Our tips

Traveling to northern Finland is a magical experience, but there are a few traps that can easily ruin your trip if you don't plan ahead.

Underestimating the cold in winter

One of the most common mistakes is thinking that "a few regular layers are enough." In reality, temperatures can drop to -30°C or even lower ! The cold in Lapland is dry but very biting. You might not feel it right away, especially with children who are playing and don't realize they're getting cold. We recommend always using a layered system, packing appropriate technical clothing, and staying still for as short a time as possible when you're outside. Also, keep in mind that not everyone feels the cold the same way, as everyone's metabolism reacts differently; some people will tell you they've never felt cold, but that might not be the case for you!

Underestimating distances

Rovaniemi may look small on a map, but the distances between attractions can be significant. Winter road conditions slow down travel, and distances can sometimes be long. It's therefore important to check travel times carefully before setting out on a trip that's too long.

Don't adjust the pace to suit the children

Another trap is planning days that are too long without breaks. Children, especially younger ones, get tired more quickly in the cold or during long summer days with the midnight sun. It's therefore best to mix physical activities with those that require less physical effort.

Choosing the right tour

Before booking, check a few things to ensure a better experience :

- Group size : A small group (minivan) is often more enjoyable than a large bus.
- Northern Lights : Some tours involve a large number of vehicles, which detracts from the peaceful and exclusive atmosphere.
- Meals included : Check whether it's just a snack or a full meal.
- Activities with animals : opt for providers outside the city for a more authentic and respectful experience.

Comparing offers often leads to a more peaceful and authentic experience in Lapland.

Forget mosquitoes during summer time

In the summer, many families focus solely on the midnight sun and forget about insects. Lapland consists of forested and wetland areas that are teeming with mosquitoes. So be sure to protect yourself with mosquito repellent or wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts when hiking near rivers and lakes.
City centers are much less prone to mosquitoes.

Santa Claus Village

Santa Claus Village is very touristy and especially popular with children. You can meet Santa Claus there (photo fee applies), but the wait can be long for such a brief encounter. The site consists mainly of shops, restaurants, and activities, so half a day is sufficient. To avoid the crowds, go in the late afternoon: the village is especially magical when it's lit up. Admission is free, and the village is accessible by bus (Line 8). Be wary of the overpriced tours offered by some agencies. Not to be confused with Santa Park, a paid indoor park open in the winter.

Contact us

Why choose us ?

- Small groups : a maximum of 8 people per activity, to ensure comfort, quality, and a friendly atmosphere.
- Bilingual guides : all our guides speak French and English, ensuring a smooth and accessible experience.
- A company on a human scale : close to our clients, with personalized support.
- Volume discounts : the larger the group, the lower the price.
- Payment in installments available : for greater flexibility.
- Customizable activities : upon request, we can tailor some of our services to your preferences.
- Trusted partners : we collaborate with service providers carefully selected for the quality of their activities, sometimes outside of Rovaniemi, to help you discover Lapland at its best.

Visit our website to learn more ! - www.nordicodyssey.net

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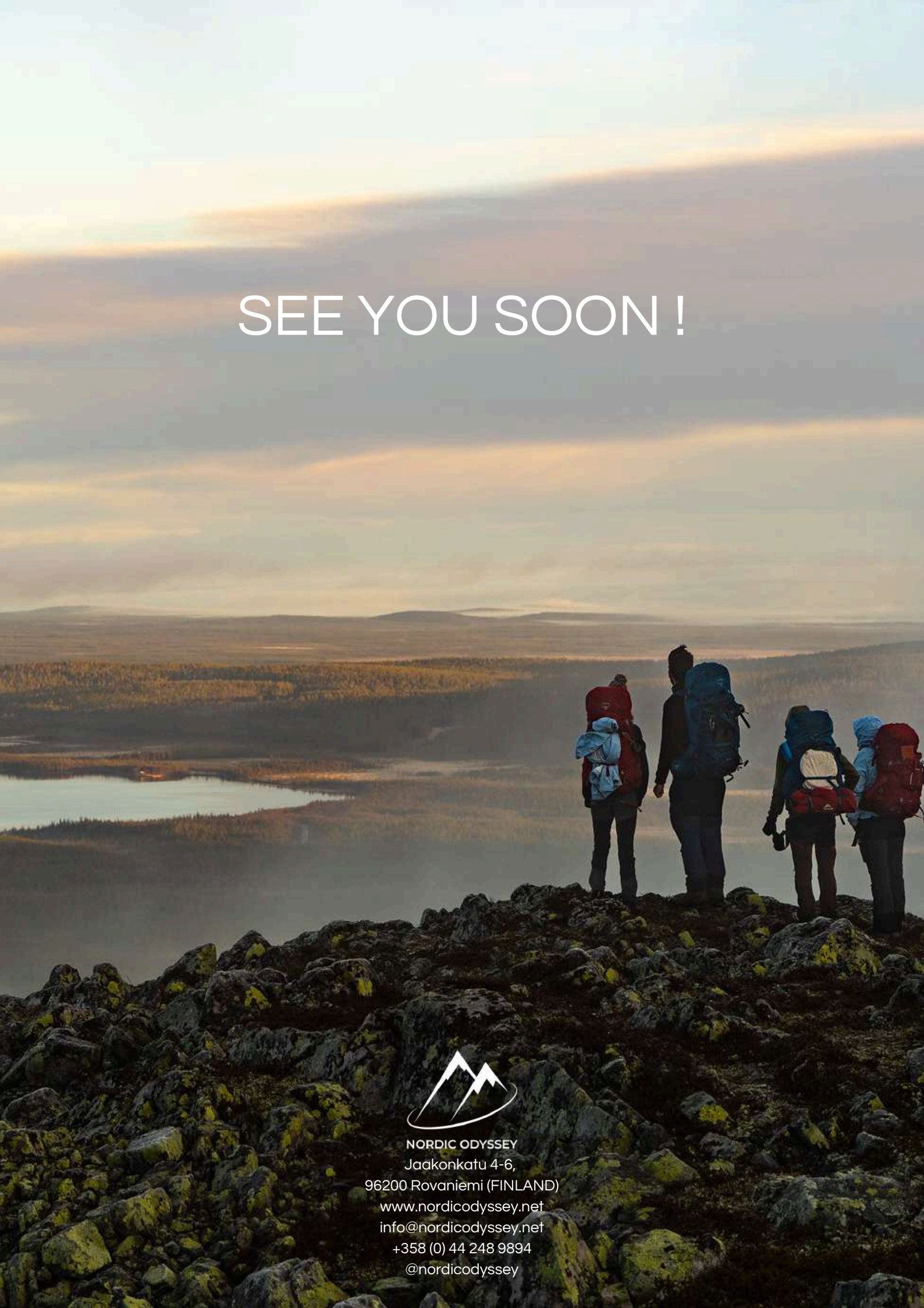

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